
Weight of Textbooks Report

The Background:

In 2003, the Tennessee General Assembly directed the State Board of Education to study and make recommendations concerning the weight of textbooks used by pupils in elementary and secondary schools by July 1, 2004. Further, the legislation stated that the “board shall submit these recommendations on an annual basis.”¹ This legislation was passed in response to the growing apprehension over the weight of student backpacks.

In an effort to collect and disseminate current textbook and backpack weight and their relationship to orthopedic health staff contacted the Tennessee Department of Health. Through this dialogue the Department of Health has agreed to explore the possibility of including backpack safety information on their website. Preliminary indications are that the Department of Health plans to focus this information on school age children and include it as part of their “Kid’s Links” site.

Currently, staff is in the process of data collection and analysis to determine the average weights of adopted core curriculum textbooks at various grade levels.

Staff has contacted members of the Tennessee Chiropractic Association and they are showing initial interest in forming an independent initiative aimed at educating parents and students about textbook weights, appropriate carriage, and prevention of injury. Staff will continue to monitor and report any progress made in this area.

These items, along with any further progress, will be presented to the general assembly in accordance with T.C.A § 496-2210.

The Recommendation:

For information purposes only; no action required.

¹ T.C.A. § 49-6-2210